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Review of the implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Identical letters dated 12 August 2004 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and President of the Security Council

I am writing in order to draw your attention to the latest terrorist attacks perpetrated against the citizens of Israel.

On 11 August 2004, Palestinian terrorists detonated a bag containing explosives and packed with metal shards at the Qalandiyah checkpoint at the northern entrance to Jerusalem. The terrorists travelled by car from Jenin southward all the way towards Jerusalem, likely stymied in their attempts to enter Israel further north because of the security fence. Six Israeli soldiers and twelve Palestinian civilians were wounded in the blast and two Palestinian bystanders were killed. Later, Yasser Arafat's own Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade proudly claimed responsibility for this act of violence and murder.

Meanwhile, rocket attacks continue to be regularly launched from the Gaza Strip against Israeli civilians, as described yesterday in the briefing to the Security Council. In the last month alone, more than 60 rockets have been launched from Beit Hanoun at Israeli communities near the Gaza Strip, causing injury and property damage. These rocket attacks, like other acts of Palestinian terror, are employed with the specific intent of killing and injuring as many civilians as possible.

This continued Palestinian use of terrorism, with the support and toleration of the Palestinian leadership, is not just an ongoing and egregious violation of basic international norms, signed commitments and the explicit terms of the Road Map. It is the enemy of peace in the region, and endangers the lives of both Israelis and Palestinians.

The firing of rockets from civilian areas in Beit Hanoun is a grave violation of international humanitarian law not only because it targets innocent Israeli civilians.

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Palestinian residents' lives are also put at risk, and held hostage, by the continued and despicable tactic adopted by Palestinian terrorists by which innocent Palestinians are used as human shields and civilian areas are used as staging grounds for terrorist atrocities in direct violation of the most basic human rights and humanitarian norms. In one recent grave incident, on 22 July 2004, a 15-year-old Palestinian boy, Hassan Jameel Al-Zaanin was killed in cold blood by Fatah Al Aqsa Martyr's Brigade terrorists when he tried to stop them from launching a Qassam rocket attack near his family home.

In the latest letter submitted to the President of the Security Council by the Palestinian Observer, dated 9 August 2004 (A/ES-10/276-S/2004/630), the death of Hassan Jameel Al-Zaanin was described as though he was killed by Israeli forces, a disingenuous absurdity. Of course, the fact that this letter presents so blatantly false an allegation should come as no surprise. The international community is very familiar with the perverse misrepresentations and outright fabrications in Palestinian statements that include referring to murderers as "martyrs", to armed terrorists as though they were innocent civilians and to the innocent victims of Palestinian terrorism as though they were non-existent. This is part of a well-known pattern of letters that ignore Palestinian responsibilities and Israeli rights and fail to recognize the excruciating difficulties faced by Israeli forces in trying to protect their citizens — and minimize harm to Palestinian civilians, who are tragically caught in the crossfire — when the terrorists they confront show as little concern in their tactics for Palestinian lives as they do for Israeli ones.

This letter and the countless before it are simply inconsistent both with the reality on the ground and with the path of mutual rights and obligations laid out in the Road Map. Sadly, however, the letter is consistent with the Palestinian leadership's refusal to take any responsibility for the pain and suffering that they have inflicted on their own people and the Israeli people, as was also demonstrated in yesterday's terror attack in Jerusalem. Israel calls upon the international community to reaffirm its absolute rejection of terrorist tactics, to accept nothing less than the complete dismantling of terrorist organizations and to use its authority to compel all regimes that sponsor terrorism in the region to fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with international law and Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 1373 (2001), and the Road Map, so that both parties can finally move forward towards peace and reconciliation.

I submit the present letter in follow-up to numerous letters detailing the campaign of Palestinian terrorism that began in September 2000, which document the criminal terrorist activity for which the terrorists and their supporters must be held fully accountable. I am submitting an identical letter to the President of the Security Council.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 156 and 67, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Arye **Mekel**
Ambassador
Deputy Permanent Representative